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Hi, Gary -

I can almost hear you saying: "Oh, look, Shelly, it's a Christmas Letter from Blackledge, my old colleague at Sandia!" Not so fast, Grasshopper! Well, yes, this letter was written on Christmas, but ... it's more of a plea for a story from you rather than providing "Here's what our family did last year."

As background: I'm working away on a compilation with plans to initially publish for family next year, entitled *Blackledge Stories*. Long story, but my son Doug died early in 2016, and this book will be my written memorial for Doug and his mother Helen - however, I want to include memoirs, anecdotes, stories from friends and colleagues as well.

Here is what I am hoping to get from you: a write-up on The Great Word-Off - the titanic struggle in the early days (yet post-Wang?) of word processing. WordStar vs WordMarc. You rode one of those chariots in the Great Race, yes?

I'm hoping you will provide a write-up on that competition to include in the book. Currently, I am also writing an article for the Albuquerque Genealogical Society on Indexing - did those word processors even address indexing a document?

I've asked George Mayes about this, and about all he can recall is that the specification for the competition held a key that determined the eventual winner - is this your recollection? At that time, Sandia had not embraced the PC, so the software had to run on a VAX. And George remembers how difficult it was to get the output to print on a 'standard' printer.

Once the holiday dust settles a bit, I would appreciate your insights, memories, and wisdom from the past - we were all the best and the brightest back then, yes?